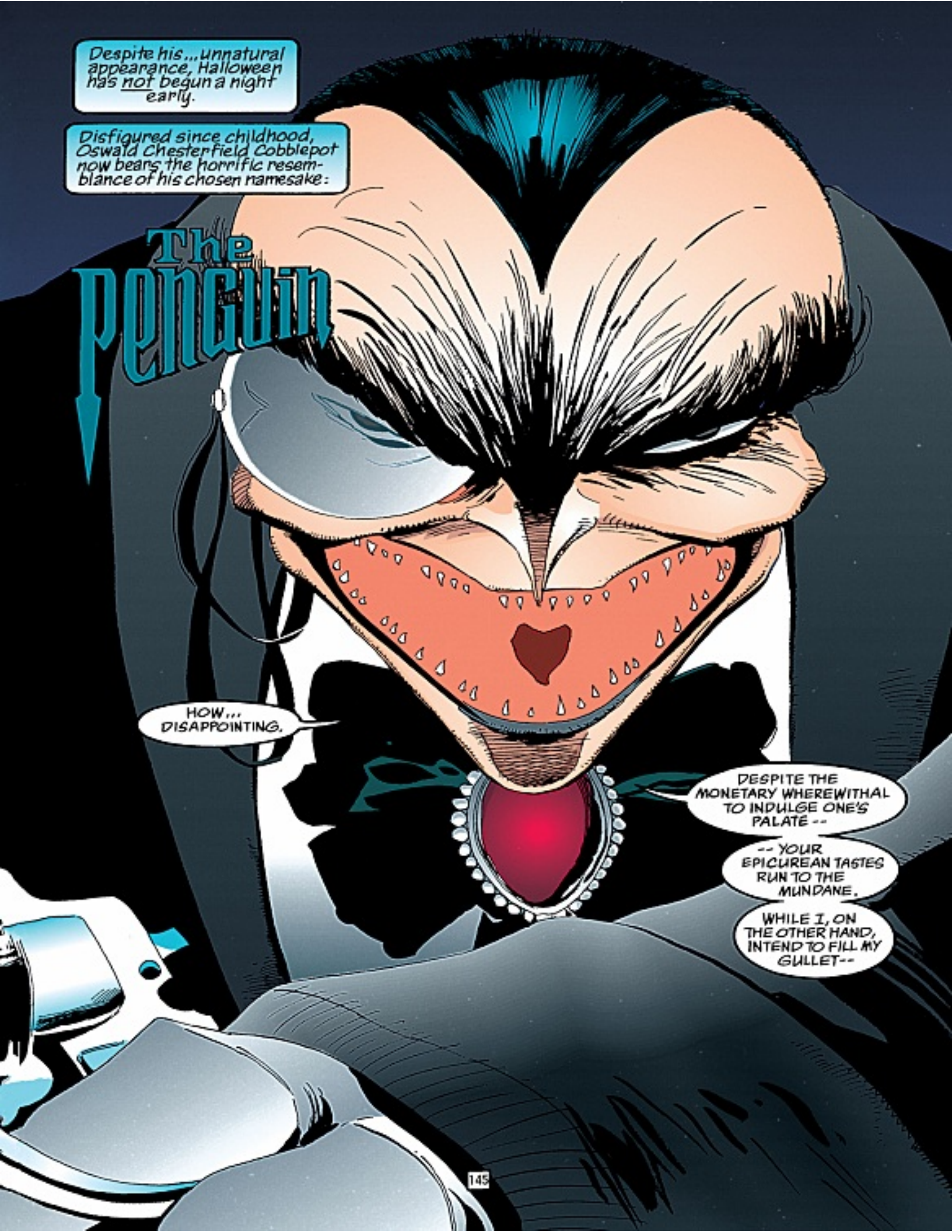
GHOSTS

THREE

'Twas the night before Halloween...
BRUCE?
LUCIUS?
IT'S BEEN YEARS...
NO... HAS IT?
AND NOW, HERE WE ARE, BACK IN GOTHAM CITY OF ALL PLACES.
YOU KNOW WHAT I WISH?
HMMM?
I WISH YOU'D TAKEN ME UPON THAT OFFER.
THE THINGS WE COULD HAVE ACCOMPLISHED.
I...OFTEN FIND MYSELF WITH MISSED OPPORTUNITIES, LUCIUS.
DON'T TAKE IT PERSONALLY.
143

While attending another in the endless array of charitable functions I endure...

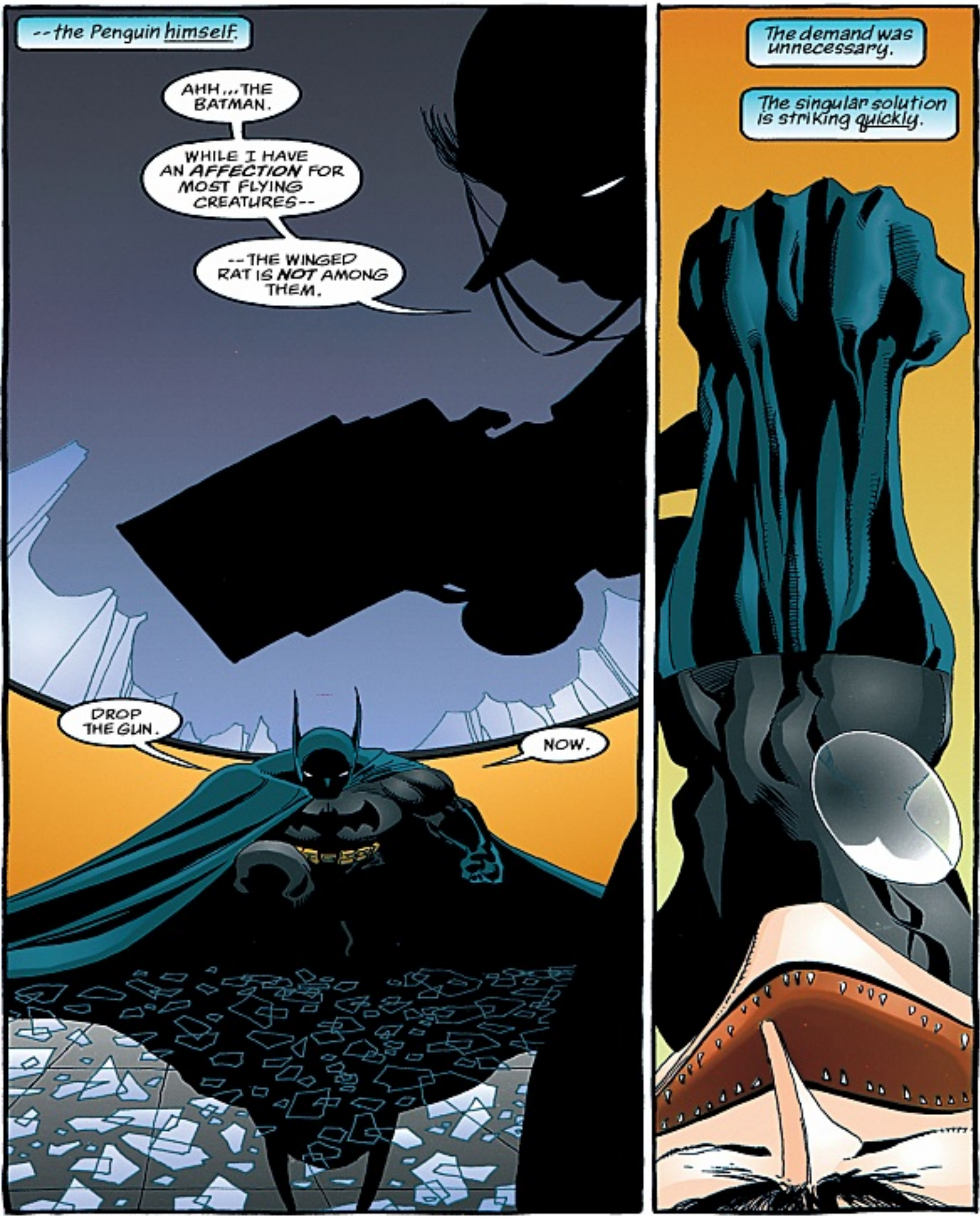
...the unexpected happens with a terrible swiftness.


Despite his...unnatural appearance, Halloween has not begun a night early.
Disfigured since childhood, Oswald Chesterfield Cobblepot now bears the horrific resemblance of his chosen namesake:
The Penguin
HOW... DISAPPOINTING.
DESPITE THE MONETARY WHEREWITHAL TO INDULGE ONE'S PALATE --
-- YOUR EPICUREAN TASTES RUN TO THE MUNDANE.
WHILE I, ON THE OTHER HAND, INTEND TO FILL MY GULLET--

--UNTIL I HAVE FETED MY RAVENOUS APPETITE!
BLAM BLAM BLAM!
KCHOW KCHOW KCHOW KCHOW
EVERYONE! DOWN!
A HERO.
ONE IN EVERY CROWD.
146

BLAM
I ASSUME NO FURTHER INSTRUCTIONS ARE NECESSARY.
BRUCE WAYNE WAS A GOOD MAN--
--WHO WASTED THE MOST PRECIOUS COMMODITY WE ALL SHARE,
TIME.
NOW THEN, YOUR WALLET. AND THAT MEDALLION.
MY... MEDALLION...
INTERESTING BAUBLE.

The grand entrance is intentional.
I want Penguin's attention focused only on me.
Hopefully, minimalizing the casualties to one--


--the Penguin himself.
AHH... THE BATMAN.
WHILE I HAVE AN AFFECTION FOR MOST FLYING CREATURES--
--THE WINGED RAT IS NOT AMONG THEM.
DROP THE GUN.
NOW.
The demand was unnecessary.
The singular solution is striking quickly.

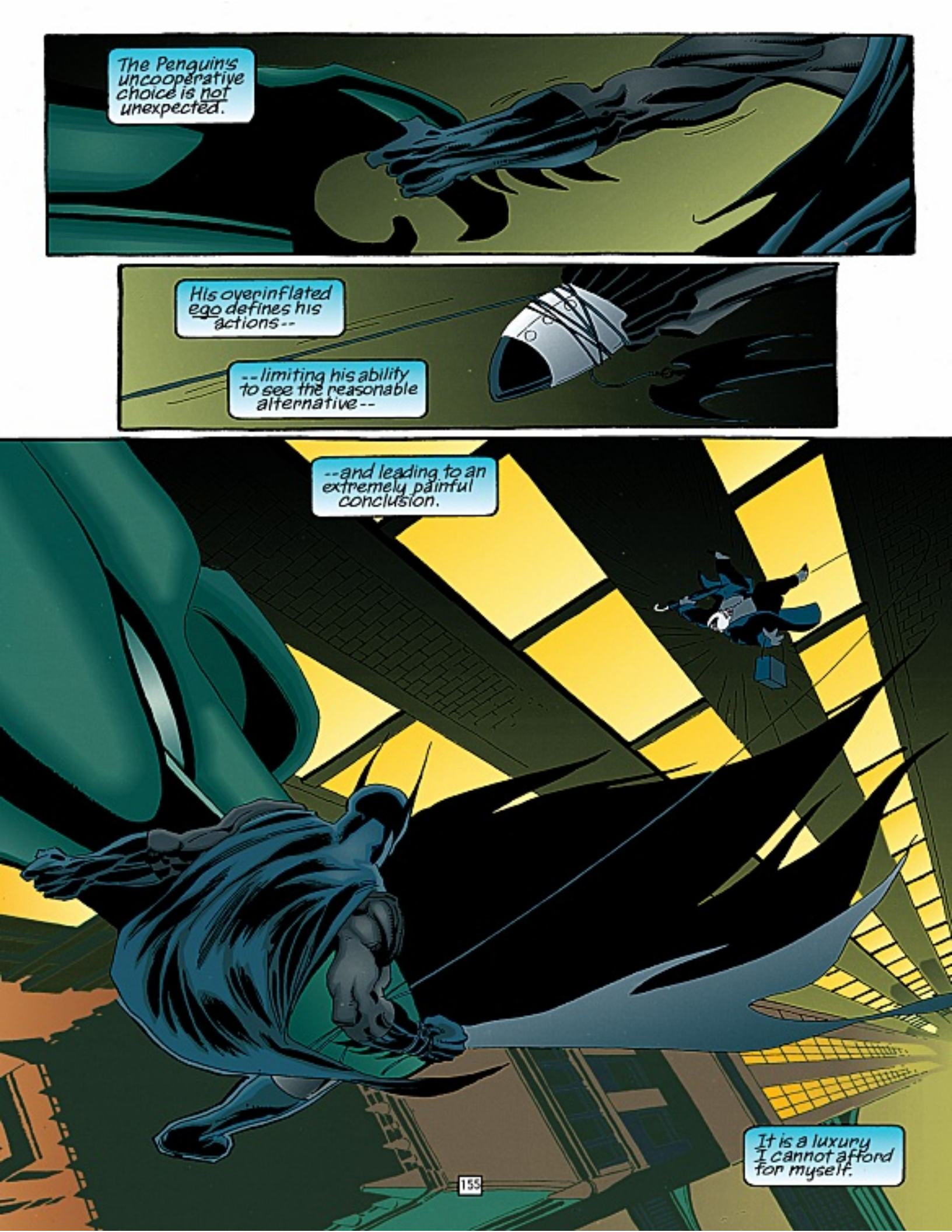
Relentlessly.
Some would say...
...savagely.
WHEN PARTAKING IN PURE FISTICUFFS--
--YOU HAVE ME AT A DISADVANTAGE.
AND RATHER THAN SUFFER THE INDIGNITY OF ANOTHER DEFEAT--
-- I'LL TAKE MY LEAVE.
Innocent lives are at stake.
Almost any means justifies the ends.
GOOD-BYE, CRUEL WORLD!

HE...HE KILLED HIMSELF.
HE MUST'VE BEEN INSANE!
NO.
One shot.
Got something.

A cobalt-driven single-stroke portable jet engine. Capable of accelerating to a three G-force.
Alfred informed me of the theft of a prototype from Gotham's Primatek Laboratories while updating the computer.

EH?
In other words...
...THIS PENGUIN FLIES!

YOU BLITHERING IDIOT!
WITH YOUR ADDED WEIGHT--
--YOU'LL KILL US BOTH!
OR.
LAND SAFELY.
IMMEDIATELY.
KCHING
I'D PREFER TO TAKE A CHANCE.
SCRITCHY-SCRATCHY
SCRITCHY-SCRATCHY
AND CUT MY LOSSES.


The Penguin's uncooperative choice is not unexpected.
His overinflated ego defines his actions--
--limiting his ability to see the reasonable alternative--
--and leading to an extremely painful conclusion.
It is a luxury I cannot afford for myself.

As the protector of Gotham City's residents--
--justice must be blind.
Expedient.
And severe.
I have learned that my decisions cannot be encumbered by one's personal indulgences.
=waugh...!=
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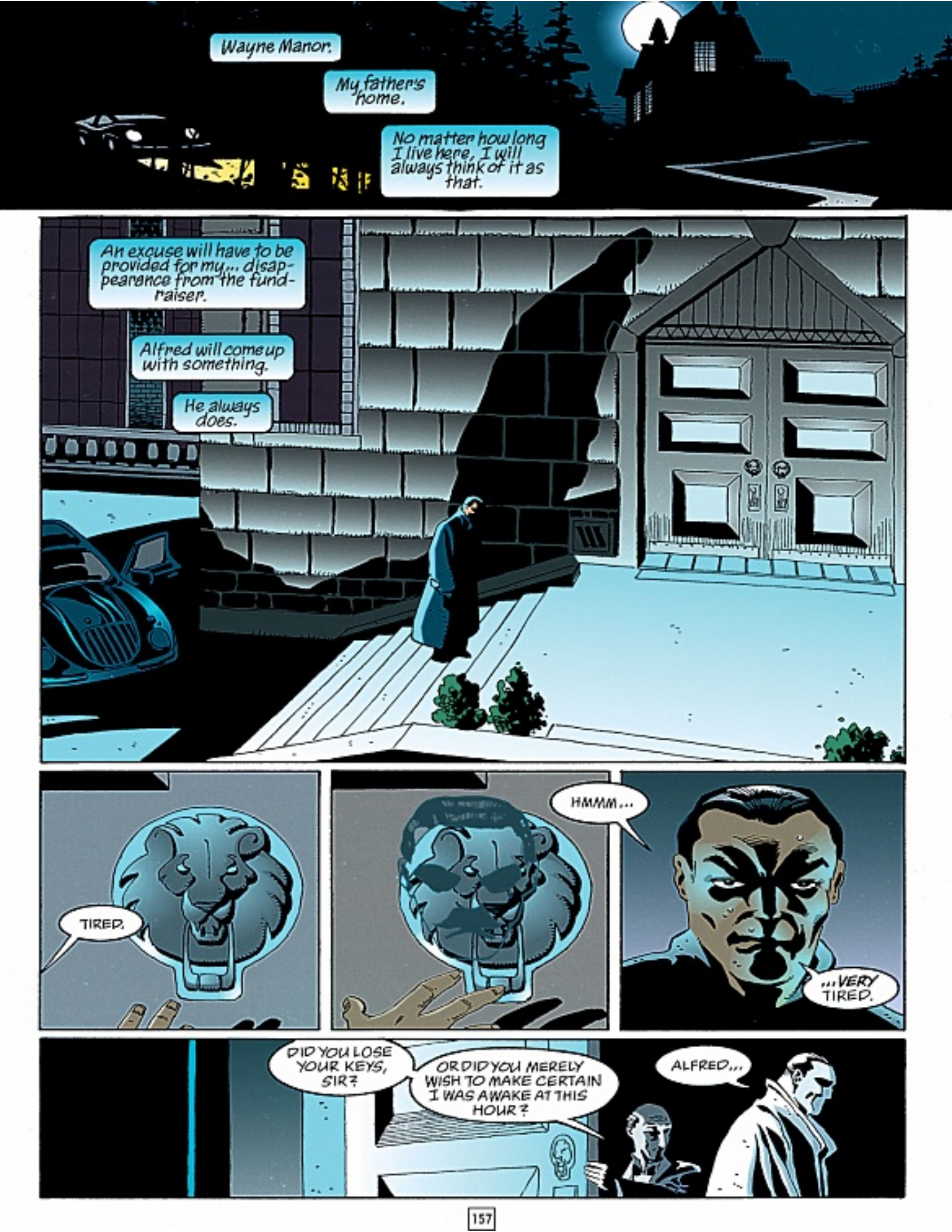
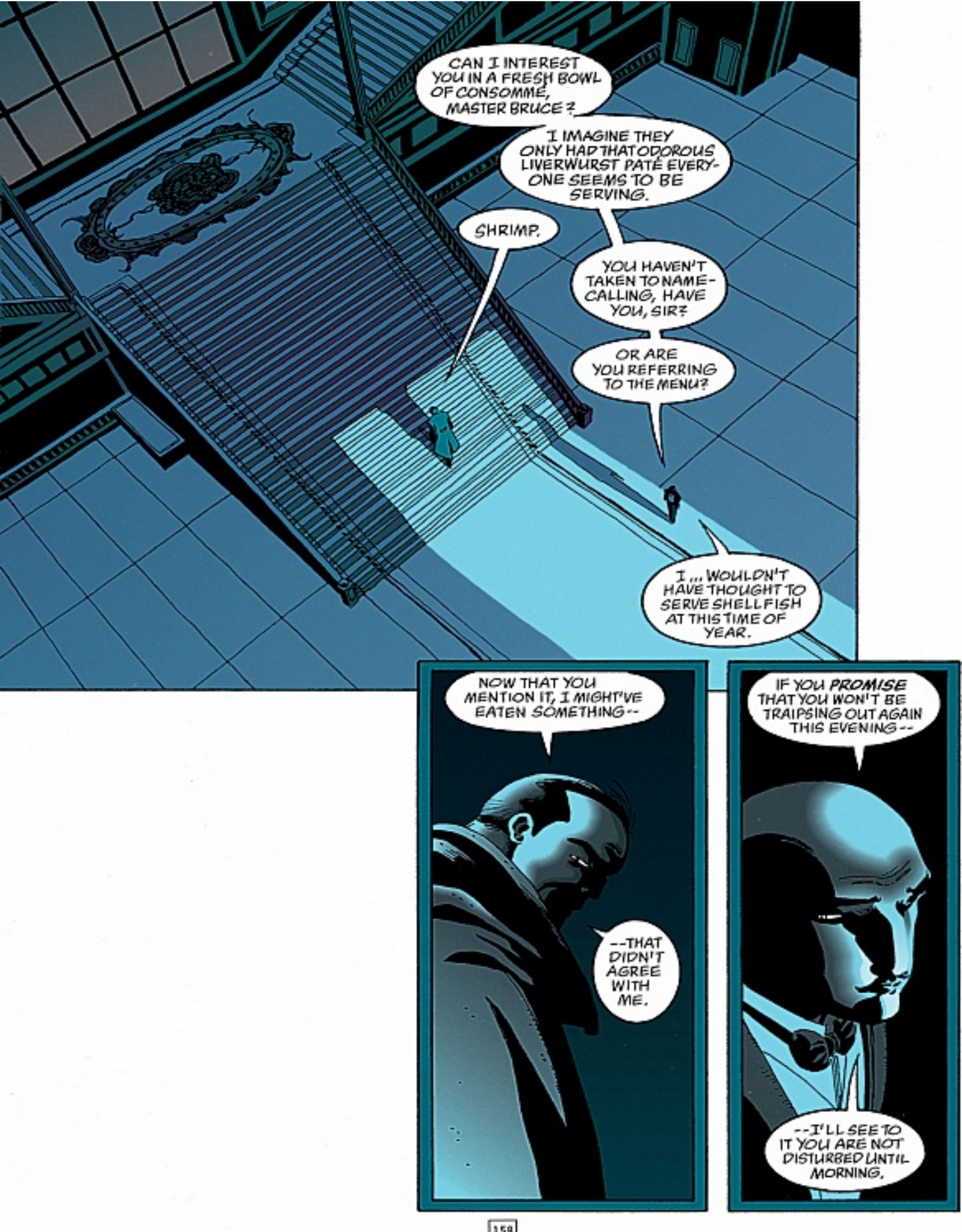
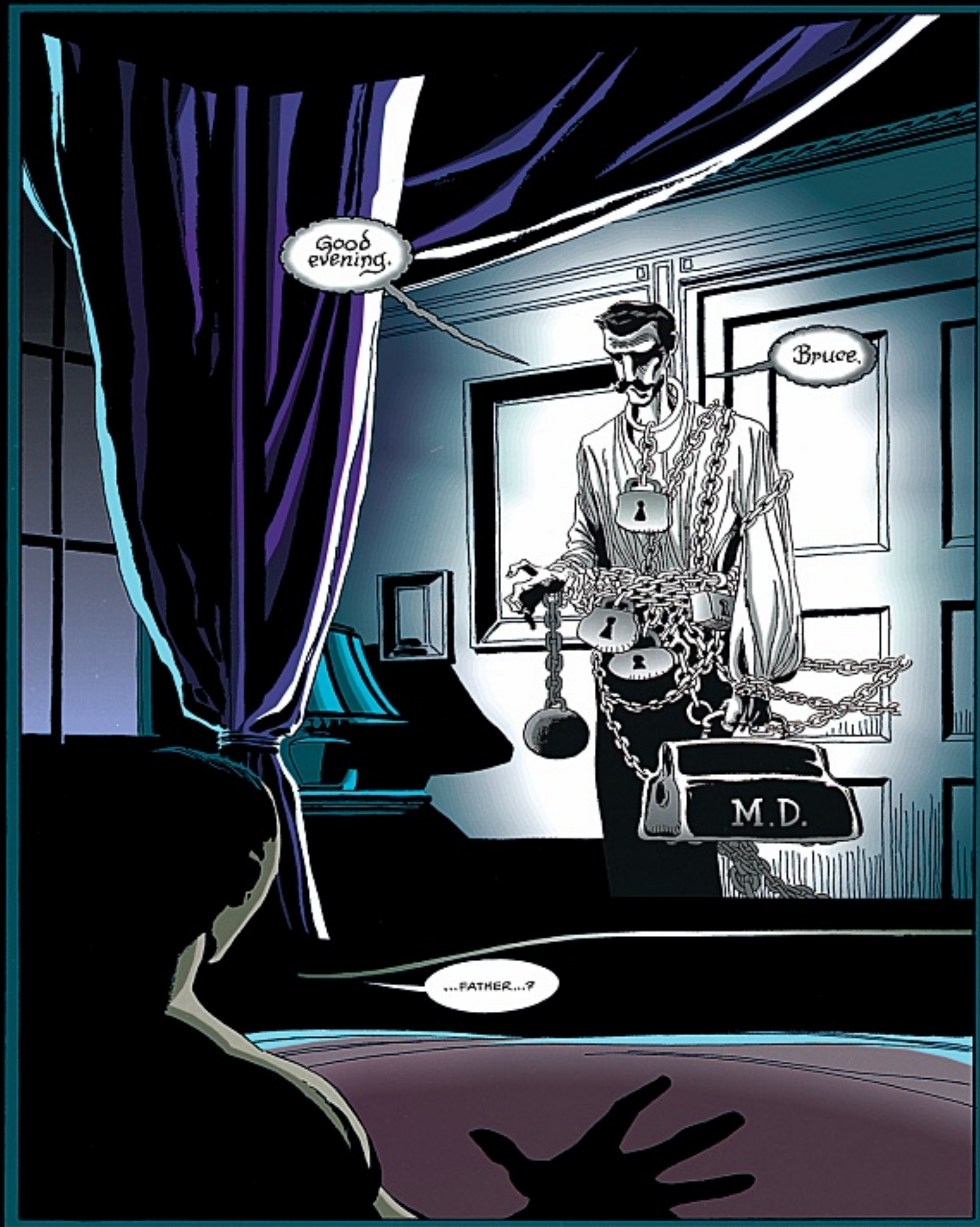
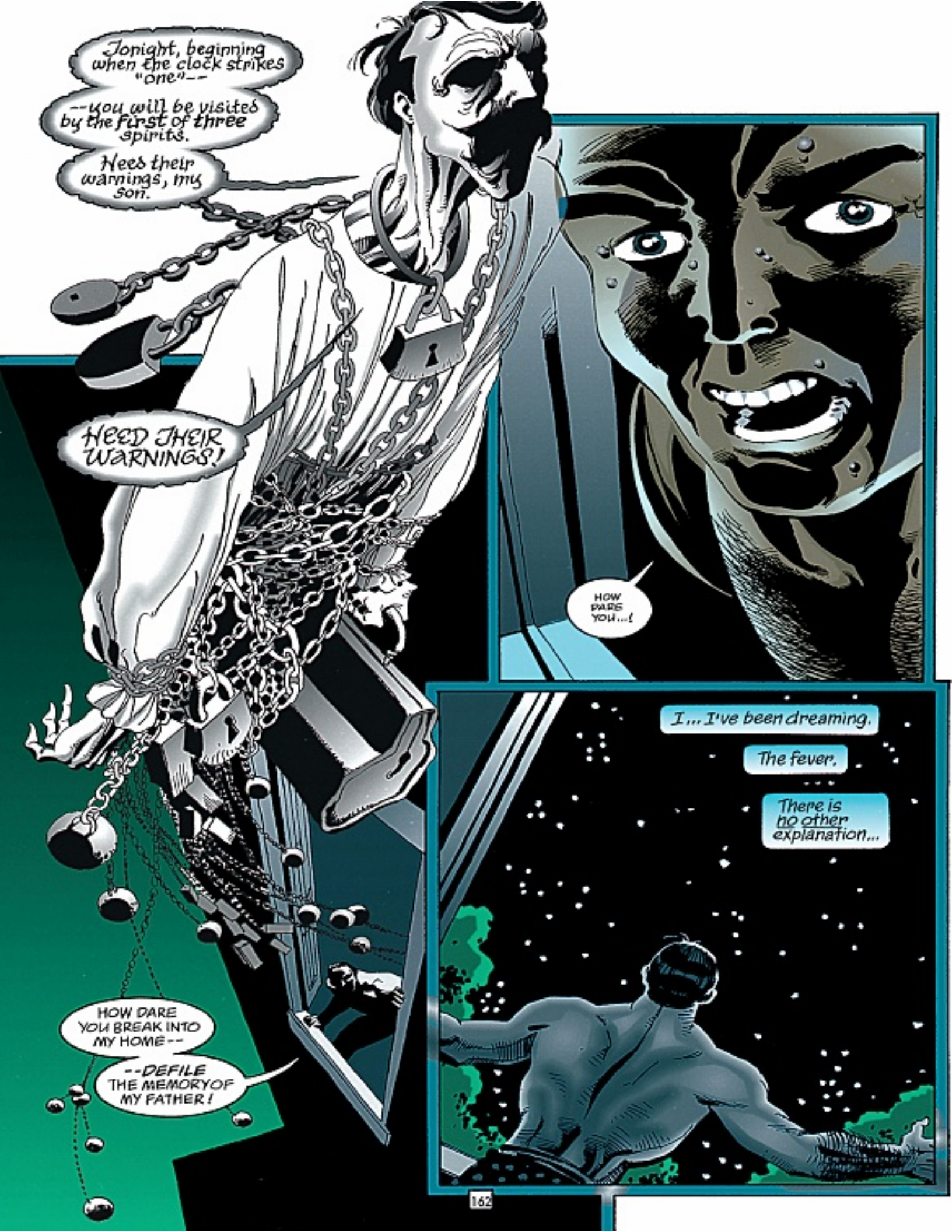

Wayne Manor.
My father's home.
No matter how long I live here, I will always think of it as that.
An excuse will have to be provided for my... disappearance from the fund-raiser.
Alfred will come up with something.
He always does.
TIRED.
HMMM...
...VERY TIRED.
DID YOU LOSE YOUR KEYS, SIR?
OR DID YOU MERELY WISH TO MAKE CERTAIN I WAS AWAKE AT THIS HOUR?
ALFRED...

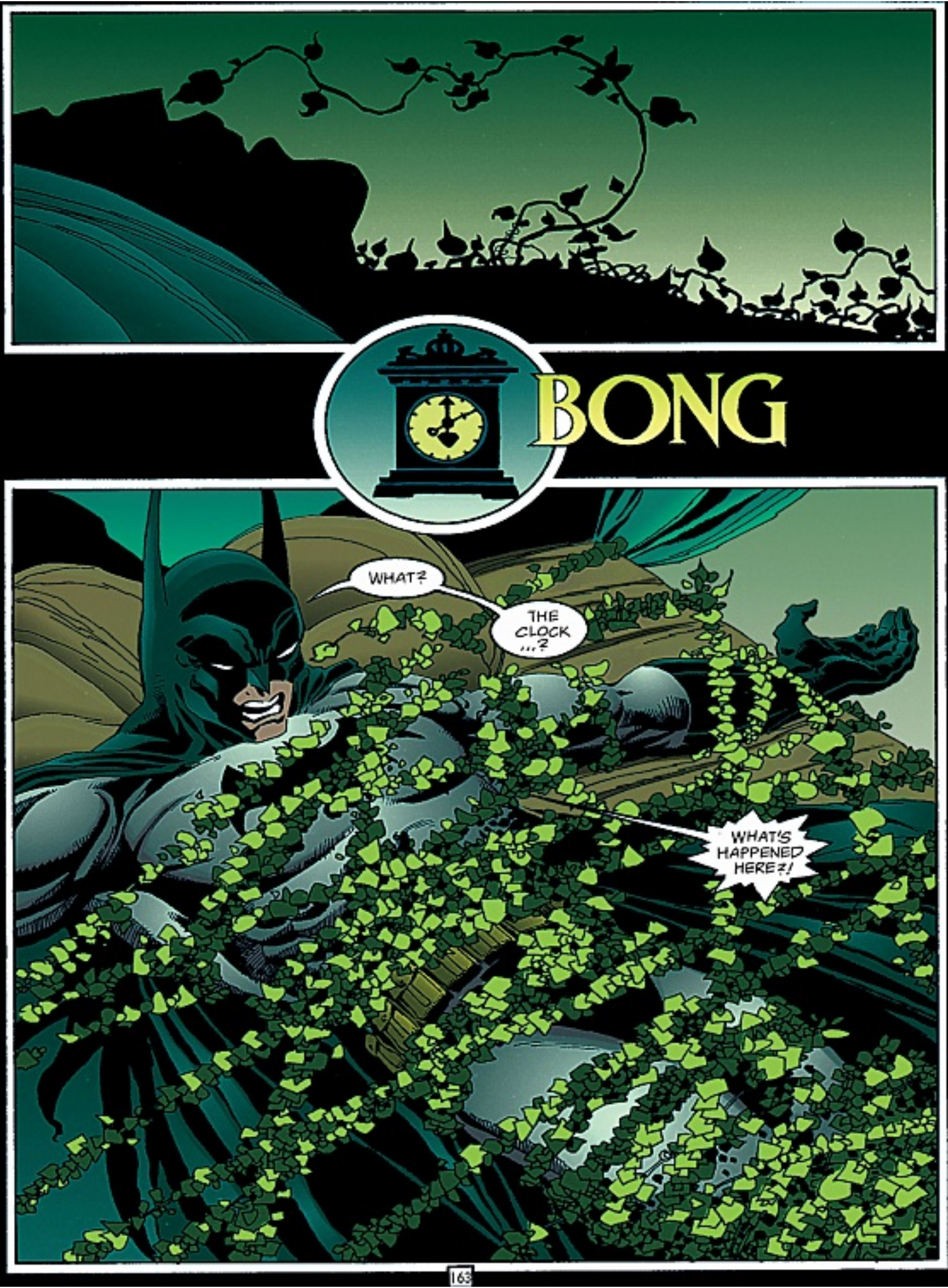

CAN I INTEREST YOU IN A FRESH BOWL OF CONSOMMÉ, MASTER BRUCE?
I IMAGINE THEY ONLY HAD THAT ODOROUS LIVERWURST PATÉ EVERY-ONE SEEMS TO BE SERVING.
SHRIMP.
YOU HAVEN'T TAKEN TO NAME-CALLING, HAVE YOU, SIR?
OR ARE YOU REFERRING TO THE MENU?
I ... WOULDN'T HAVE THOUGHT TO SERVE SHELLFISH AT THIS TIME OF YEAR.
NOW THAT YOU MENTION IT, I MIGHT'VE EATEN SOMETHING--
--THAT DIDN'T AGREE WITH ME.
IF YOU PROMISE THAT YOU WON'T BE TRAIPSING OUT AGAIN THIS EVENING--
--I'LL SEE TO IT YOU ARE NOT DISTURBED UNTIL MORNING.

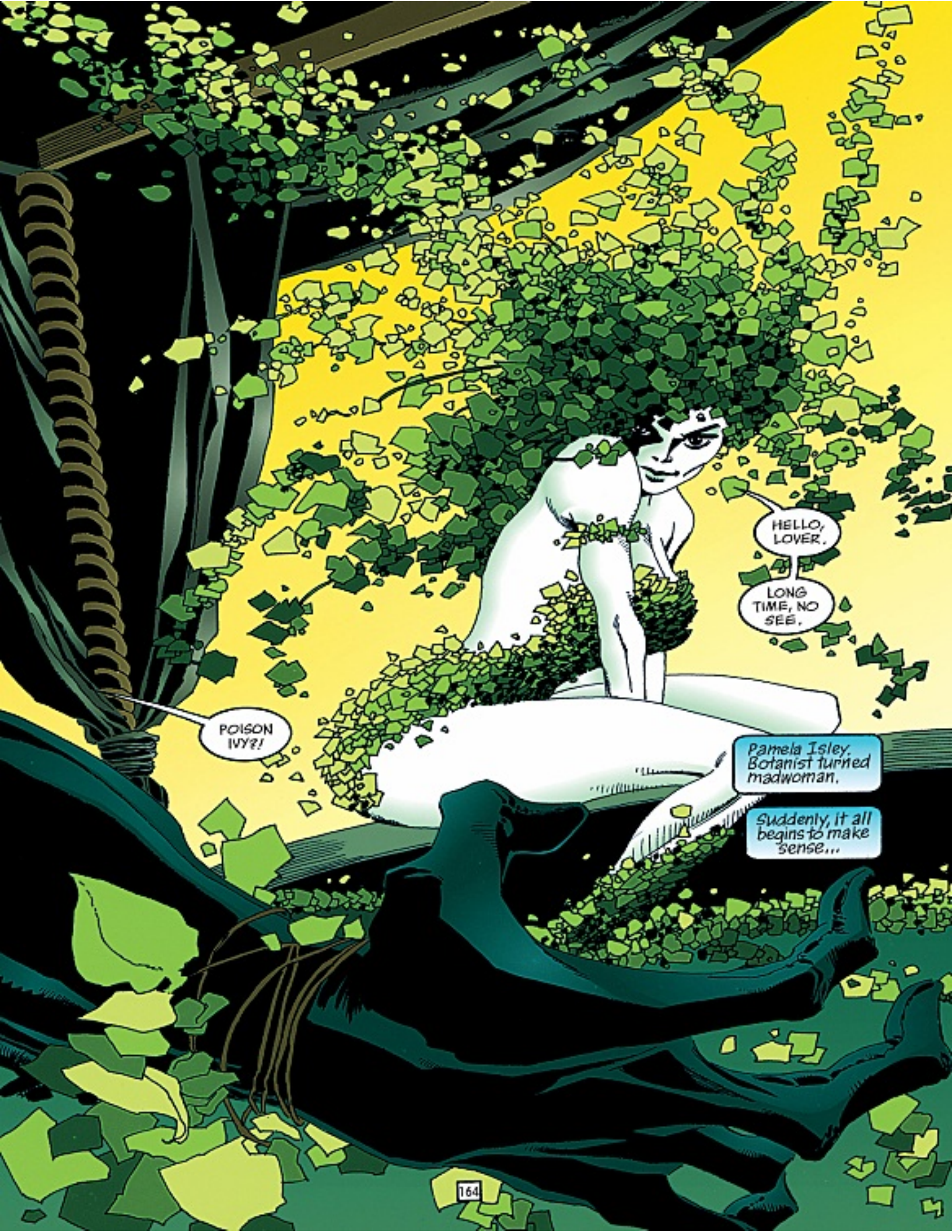
Can't sleep.
Feverish.
Perhaps that accounts for what I saw--
--or thought I saw--
--on the front door...
CLANK CHING CLANK
ALFRED...?
CLANK CHING CLANK
CLANK CHING CLANK
ALFRED, WHAT ARE YOU DOING OUT THERE?
CLANK CHING CLANK

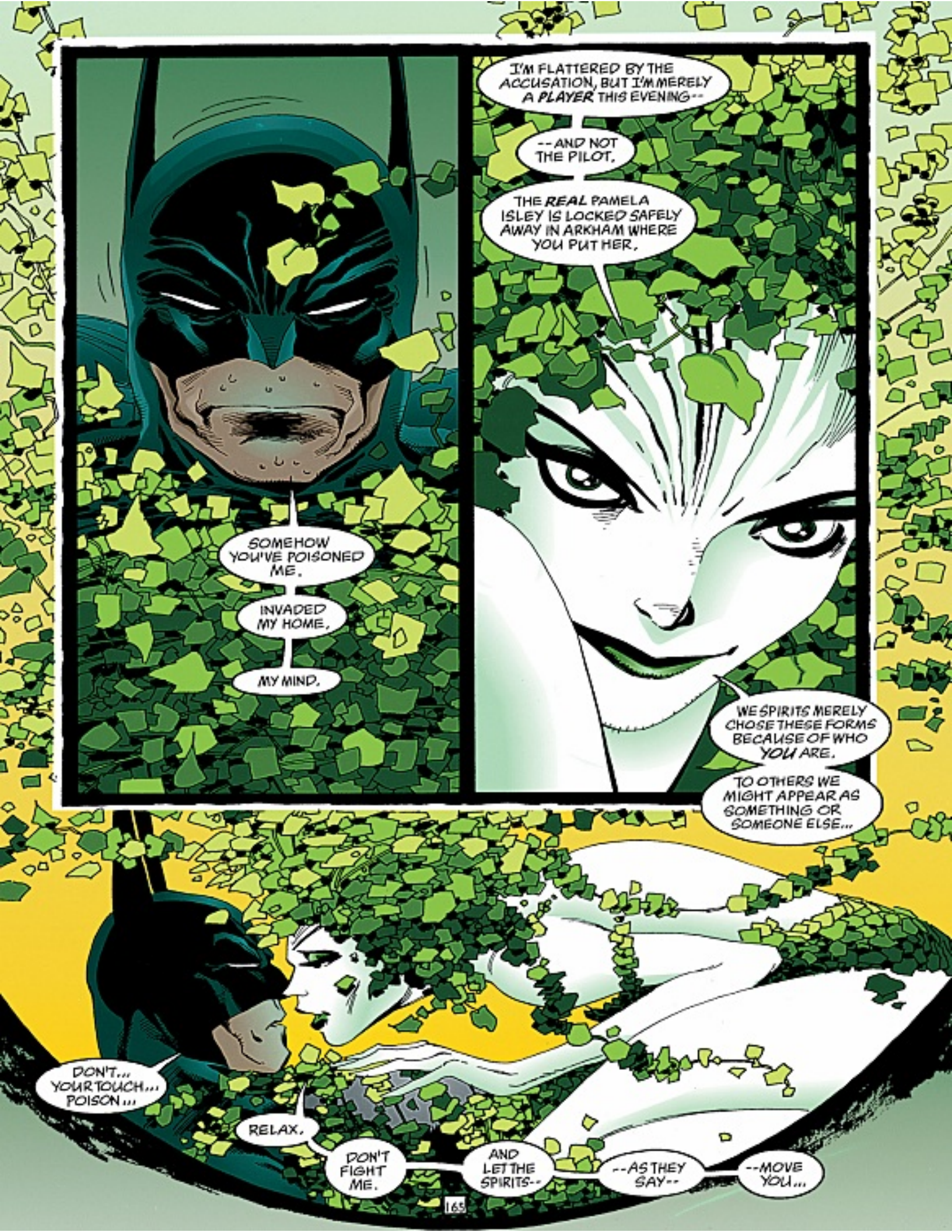

Good evening.
Bruce.
M.D.
...FATHER...?

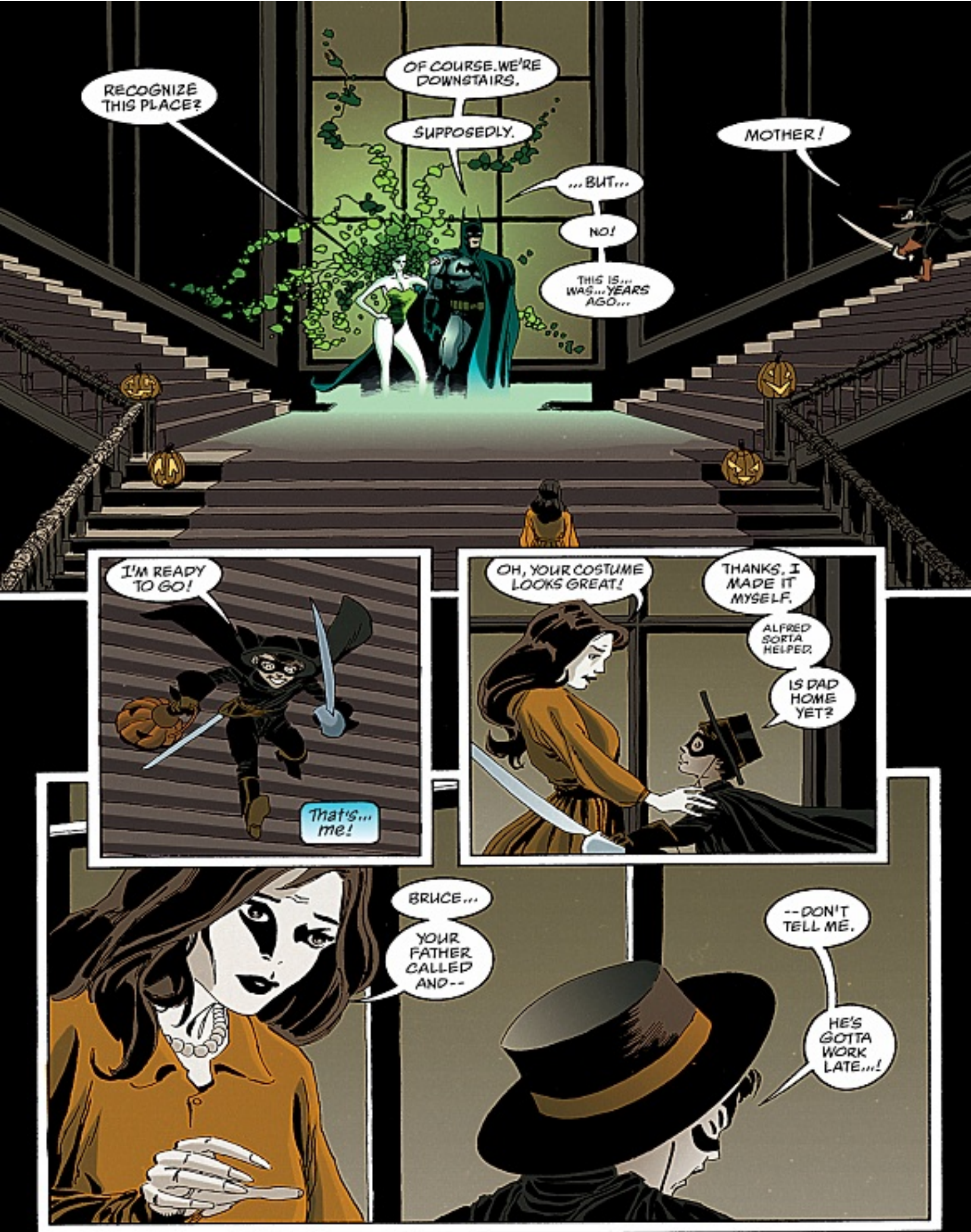
NO!
THIS IS SOMEONE'S IDEA OF A HALLOWEEN JOKE--
--A PERVERSE PRANK!
Do not waste the brief time we have by denying my existence before you.
Look instead, long and hard at the weight I carry now.
These chains I wear I forged in life.
Link by link, yard by yard, I made this burden.
Obsessed with my medical practice, I lost sight of what was truly important.
YOU'RE WRONG! MY FATHER SAVED LIVES!
HE WAS A GREAT MAN!
Bruce...
I have risked much by coming to you and have done so out of love.
I pray I am not too late.
Your obsession with Batman--
--creates an even greater and more thunderous chain!


Tonight, beginning when the clock strikes "one"--
--you will be visited by the first of three spirits.
Hees their warnings, my son.
HEED THEIR WARNINGS!
HOW DARE YOU...!
I... I've been dreaming.
The fever.
There is no other explanation...
HOW DARE YOU BREAK INTO MY HOME--
--DEFILE THE MEMORY OF MY FATHER!


BONG
WHAT?
THE CLOCK ...?
WHAT'S HAPPENED HERE?!

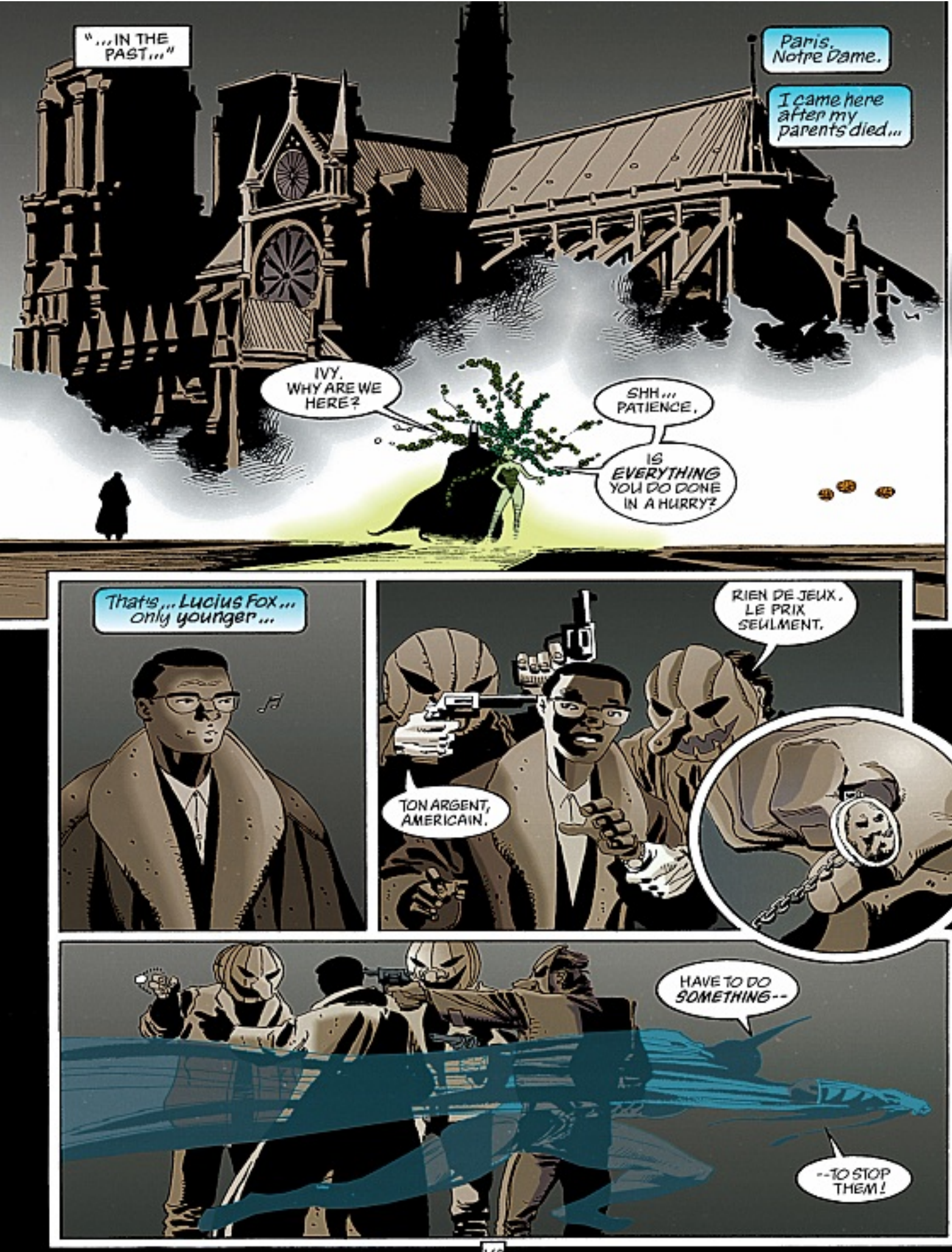

HELLO, LOVER.
LONG TIME, NO SEE.
POISON IVY?!
Pamela Isley. Botanist turned madwoman.
Suddenly, it all begins to make sense...


SOMEHOW YOU'VE POISONED ME.
INVADED MY HOME.
MY MIND.
I'M FLATTERED BY THE ACCUSATION, BUT I'M MERELY A PLAYER THIS EVENING--
--AND NOT THE PILOT.
THE REAL PAMELA ISLEY IS LOCKED SAFELY AWAY IN ARKHAM WHERE YOU PUT HER.
WE SPIRITS MERELY CHOSE THESE FORMS BECAUSE OF WHO YOU ARE.
TO OTHERS WE MIGHT APPEAR AS SOMETHING OR SOMEONE ELSE...
DON'T... YOUR TOUCH... POISON...
RELAX.
DON'T FIGHT ME.
AND LET THE SPIRITS--
--AS THEY SAY--
--MOVE YOU...


RECOGNIZE THIS PLACE?
OF COURSE. WE'RE DOWNSTAIRS.
SUPPOSEDLY.
...BUT...
NO!
THIS IS... WAS... YEARS AGO...
MOTHER!
I'M READY TO GO!
That's... me!
OH, YOUR COSTUME LOOKS GREAT!
THANKS, I MADE IT MYSELF.
ALFRED SORTA HELPED.
IS DAD HOME YET?
BRUCE...
YOUR FATHER CALLED AND--
--DON'T TELL ME.
HE'S GOTTA WORK LATE...!

IT'S NOT FAIR!
HE PROMISED HE WOULD TAKE ME TRICK OR TREATING!
HE PROMISED...
I KNOW.
BUT THERE WAS AN EMERGENCY ...
THERE'S ALWAYS SOME EMERGENCY!
YOUR DAD WANTED TO BE THERE -- IF HE COULD, ONLY--
BATMAN.
THEY CANNOT SEE OR HEAR YOU.
I'M GONNA WAIT FOR HIM.
EVEN IF IT TAKES ALL NIGHT!
BRUCE, I COULD TAKE YOU OUT MYSELF.
OR, WE CAN CALL SOME OF THE OTHER CHILDREN AT SCHOOL AND GO OUT WITH THEM.
SHE... DOESN'T KNOW...

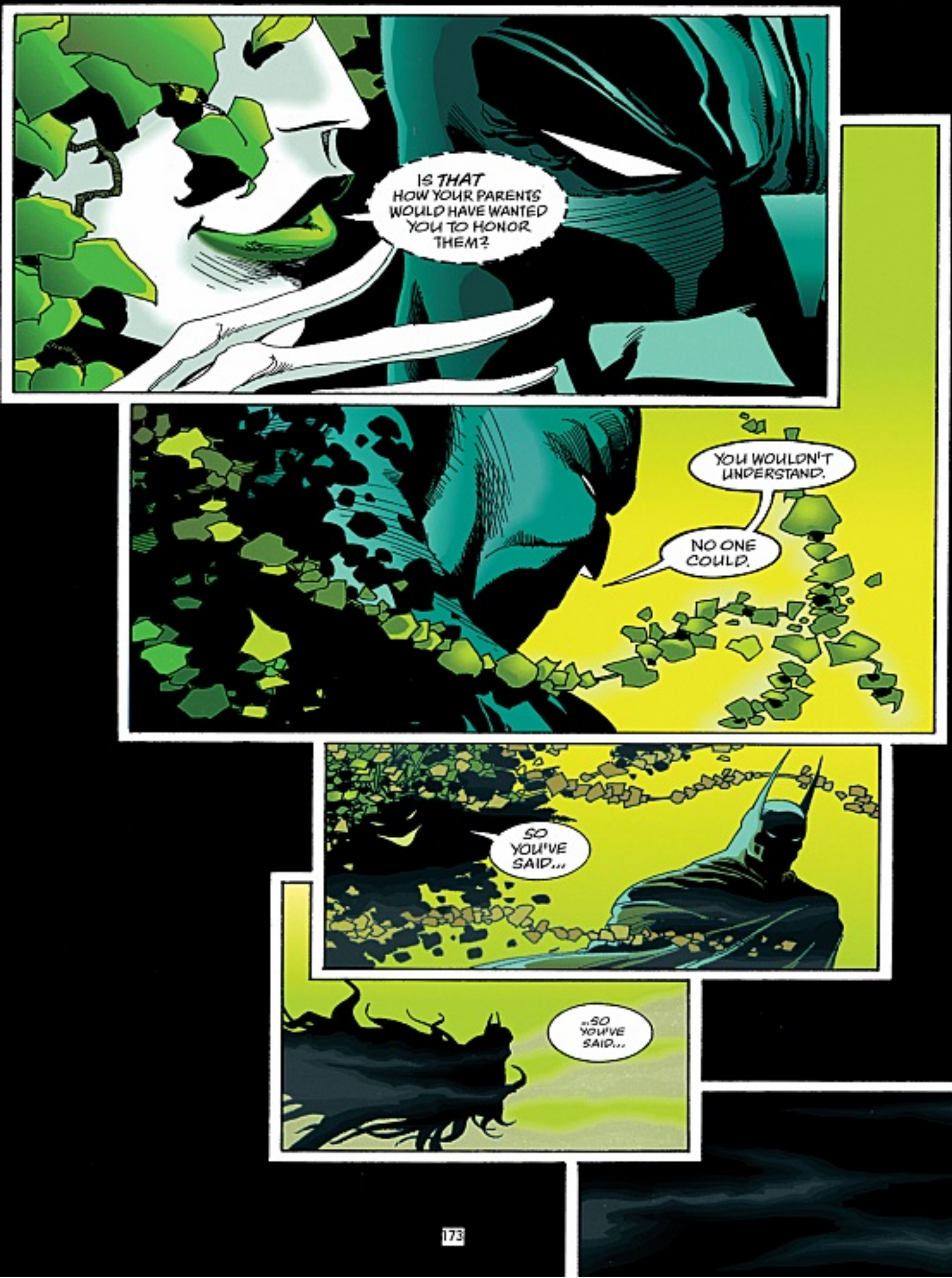
THERE ARE NO OTHER KIDS TO CALL.
I HAVE NO FRIENDS AT SCHOOL.
BRUCE...
IVY.
THIS HAS GONE ON LONG ENOUGH.
WHATEVER SPELL YOU PUT ME UNDER--
--YOU'VE MADE YOUR POINT.
REALLY.
I'M AFRAID YOU'RE GOING TO FIND THIS EVENING WON'T WORK LIKE THAT.
WE HAVE... MUCH MORE AHEAD OF US...


"...IN THE PAST..."
Paris, Notre Dame.
I came here after my parents died...
IVY. WHY ARE WE HERE?
SHH... PATIENCE.
IS EVERYTHING YOU DO DONE IN A HURRY?
That's... Lucius Fox... only younger...
RIEN DE JEUX. LE PRIX SEULMENT.
TON ARGENT, AMERICAIN.
HAVE TO DO SOMETHING--
--TO STOP THEM!

YOU DO.
REMEMBER?
Again... that's me!
I'd... forgotten how...
...reckless I could be back then.

WHAT YOU LACKED IN POLISH, YOU CERTAINLY MADE UP FOR IN EFFECTIVENESS.
I WAS... LEARNING. WITHOUT WEAPONS OR A COSTUME.
FOOLISH, REALLY.
AS OPPOSED TO SAILING ACROSS GOTHAM CITY WITH THE PENGUIN?
HOW COULD YOU KNOW ABOUT THAT?
HOW COULD YOU KNOW ABOUT ANY OF THIS?!
YOUR THINGS.
TH-THANKS. YOU'RE AN AMERICAN, HUH?
STAY OUT OF THIS NEIGHBORHOOD AT NIGHT.
IT'S DANGEROUS.
WAIT!
LET ME AT LEAST BUY YOU DINNER...

BRUCE. WAYNE.
THE BRUCE WAYNE?
JUST... BUMMING AROUND PARIS?
HMMM? YES, I SUPPOSE.
YOU KNOW, I'VE BEEN THINKING.
OUR MEETING TONIGHT COULD TURN OUT TO BE... FORTUITOUS.
FOR BOTH OF US.
HOW DO YOU MEAN?
MY EXPERTISE IS IN FINANCE--
--AND WITH YOUR FAMILY FORTUNE, WE COULD REALLY DO SOMETHING EXTRAORDINARY.
NO. THAT MONEY--
LIKE ME--
--HAS ALREADY BEEN COMMITTED ELSEWHERE.
KIND OF... ABRUPT, WEREN'T YOU?
HE WAS ONLY OFFERING YOU AN OPPORTUNITY...
LUCIUS WOULDN'T HAVE UNDERSTOOD.
NO ONE COULD.
I MADE A PROMISE.
TO HONOR MY PARENTS.
SOMEDAY TO RID GOTHAM CITY OF THE CRIME THAT TOOK THEIR LIVES.


IS THAT HOW YOUR PARENTS WOULD HAVE WANTED YOU TO HONOR THEM?
YOU WOULDN'T UNDERSTAND.
NO ONE COULD.
SO YOU'VE SAID...
...SO YOU'VE SAID...

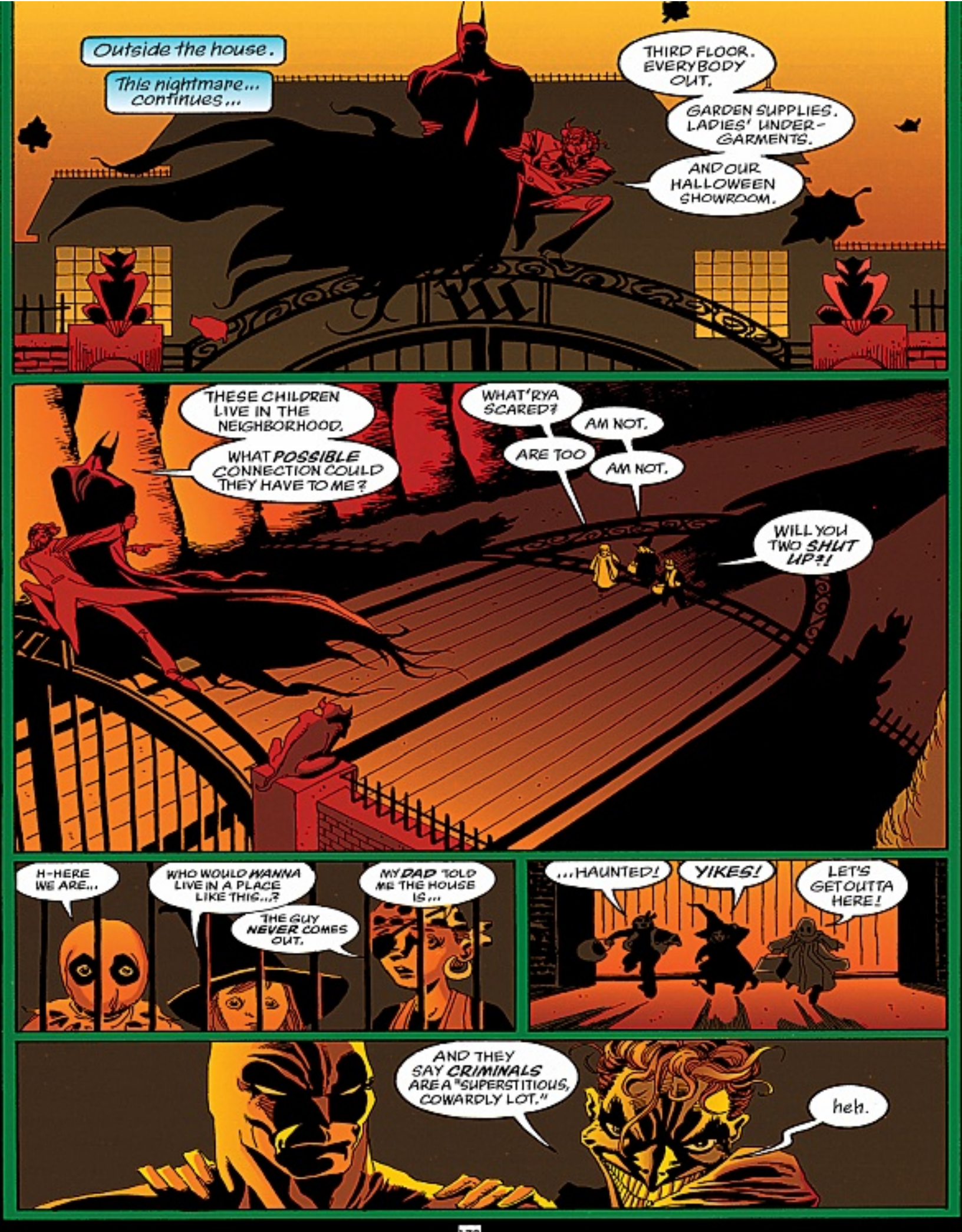
Awake...!
HOME.
IN MY BED.
ALL OF IT... SOME KIND OF NIGHTMARE...
...THE SHRIMP I ATE...
The porcelain bowl feels cold.
My head feels hot.
BONG BONG
he-Heee-Ho-ha!
Laughter?

WHAT'S THIS?!
Hee-hee-HOO-ha!
ONLY ONE MAN HAS THAT INSANE LAUGH ...

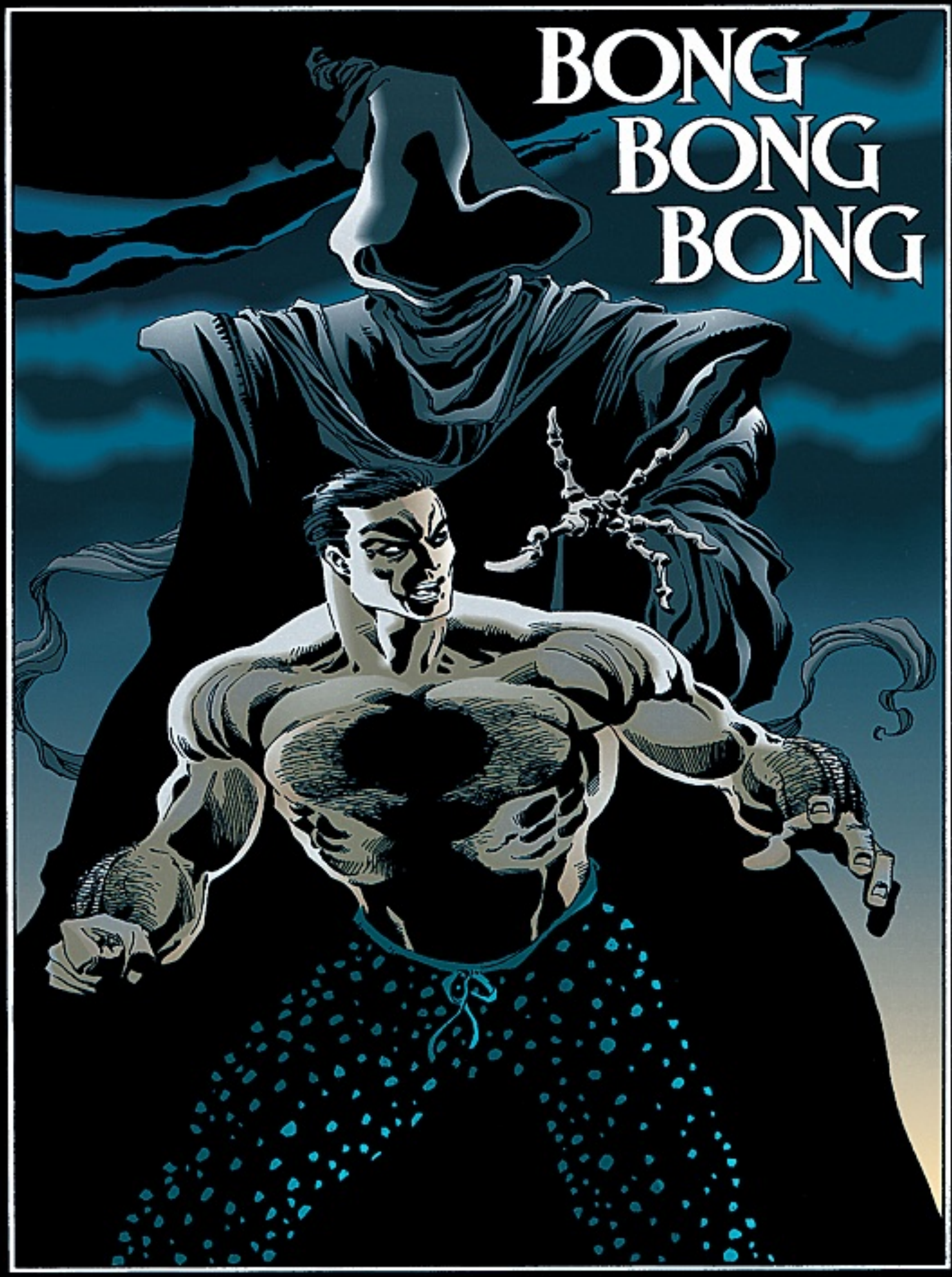
Joker.
Joker.
JOKER!

Hee-HOO-
ha-ha-haa--
HEEEEee--
heh.

OOO.
ROUGH-HOUSING.
MISSED ME.
MISSED ME.
NOW YOU GOTTA KISS ME.
YOU KNOW, FOR THE "WORLD'S GREATEST DETECTIVE"--
--YOU SURE ARE HAVING TROUBLE GETTING IT THROUGH YOUR THICK SKULL THAT YOU CAN'T TOUCH ME.
I MEAN, NO POINT IN BEATING A DEAD HORSE, BATTY, OLD BOY.
UNLESS, OF COURSE, YOU LIKE THE TASTE OF HORSE MEAT.
Another one of those...
...spirits?

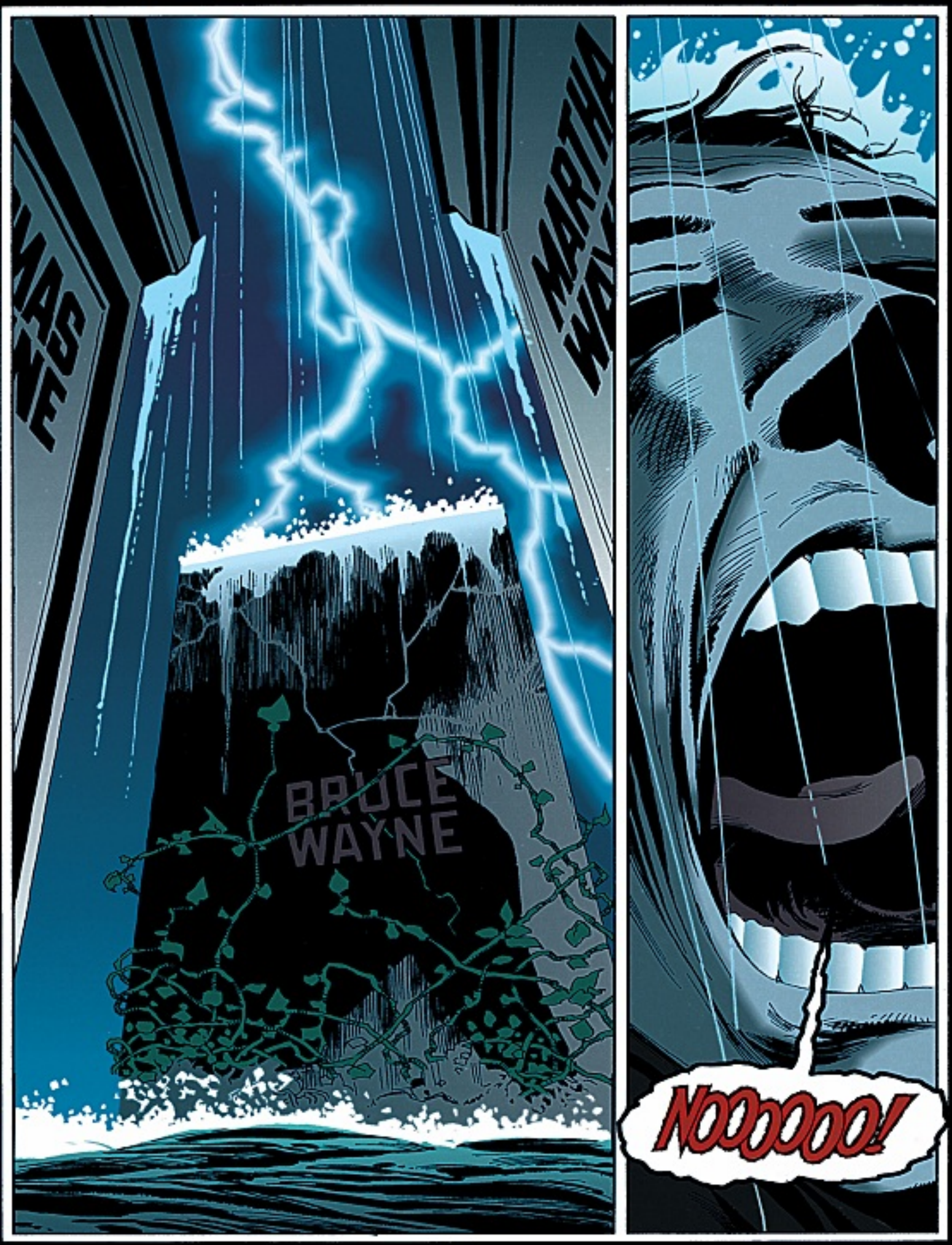

Outside the house.
This nightmare... continues...
THIRD FLOOR. EVERYBODY OUT.
GARDEN SUPPLIES. LADIES' UNDER-GARMENTS.
AND OUR HALLOWEEN SHOWROOM.
THESE CHILDREN LIVE IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD.
WHAT POSSIBLE CONNECTION COULD THEY HAVE TO ME?
WHAT'RYA SCARED?
AM NOT.
ARE TOO
AM NOT.
WILL YOU TWO SHUT UP?!
H-HERE WE ARE...
WHO WOULD WANNA LIVE IN A PLACE LIKE THIS...?
THE GUY NEVER COMES OUT.
MY DAD TOLD ME THE HOUSE IS...
...HAUNTED!
YIKES!
LET'S GET OUTTA HERE!
AND THEY SAY CRIMINALS ARE A "SUPERSTITIOUS, COWARDLY LOT."
heh.

YA KNOW...
COME TO THINK OF IT.
NEITHER ONE OF US HAS ANY FRIENDS.
AND ANYBODY WHO WOULD WANT TO GET TO KNOW US WOULD HAVE TO BE--
NUTS!
I AM NOT.
IN ANY WAY.
LIKE YOU.
OH, NO?
DIDJA GET A GOOD GANDER AT THOSE KIDS' FACES?
WELL, WELL, LOOK AT THE TIME.
ONE MORE GHOST TO GO, BATBOOB.
AND WE WERE HAVING SUCH FUN.
AND BELIEVE ME...
...IT'S A KILLER!

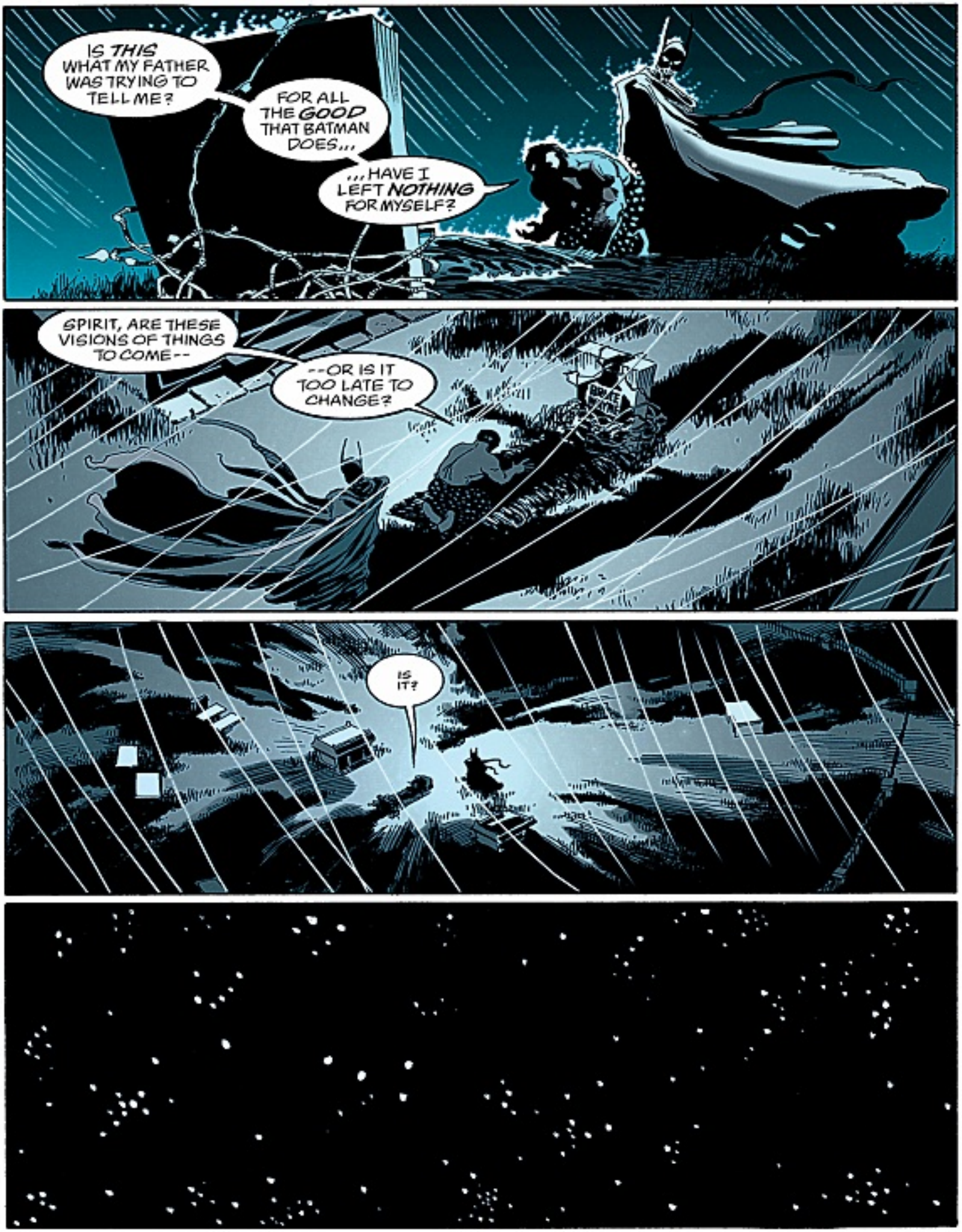

BONG
BONG
BONG

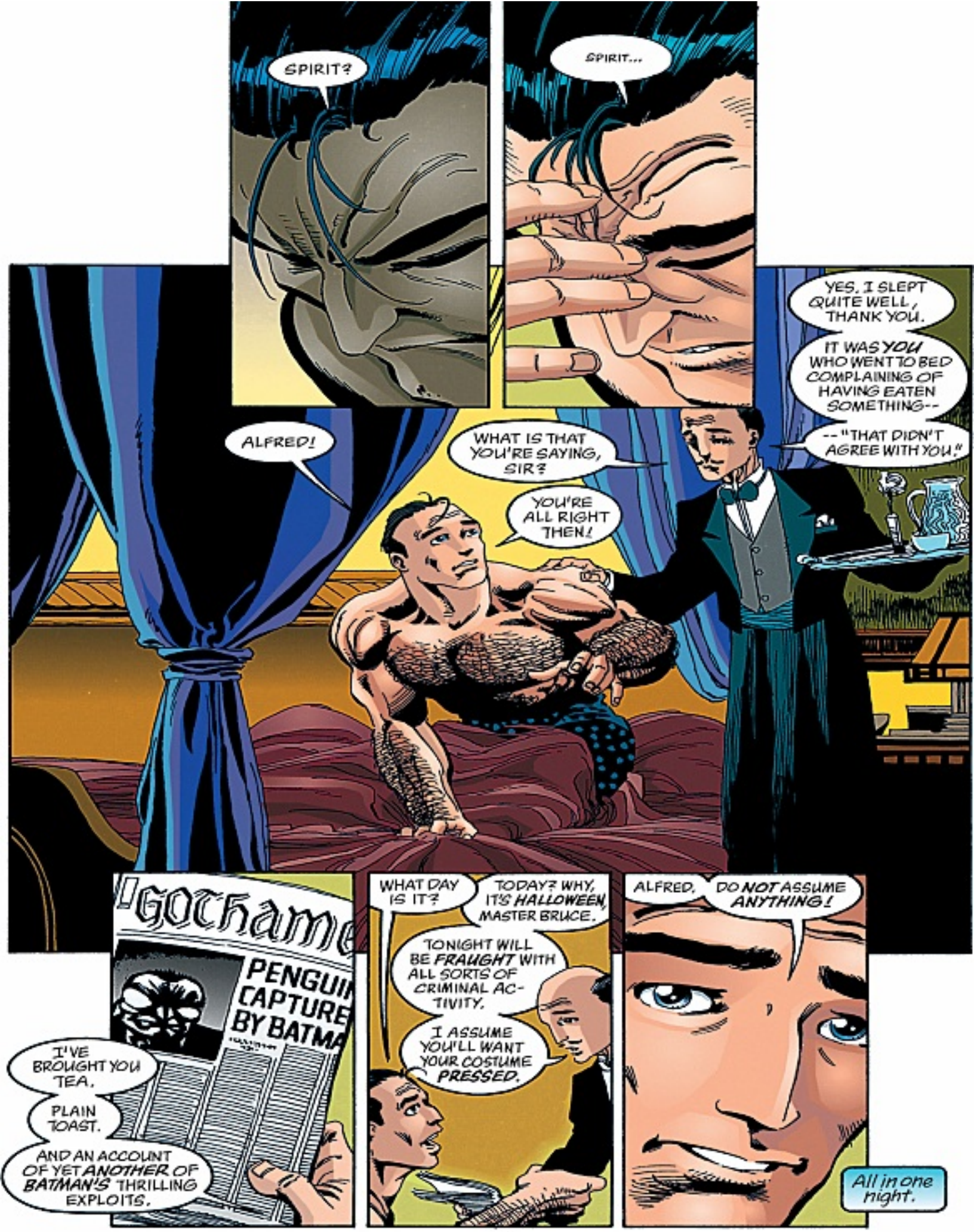
Cold.
IKIRAIK
WHERE--
WHAT'S HAPPENED TO THE HOUSE?!
WHERE IS ALFRED?!
IKIRAIK

I... KNOW THIS PLACE.
MY PARENTS ARE BURIED HERE.
WHO IS THAT DOWN THERE?
ALFRED...?
ONLY... MUCH OLDER AND...
...WHOSE LONELY GRAVE IS HE VISITING?

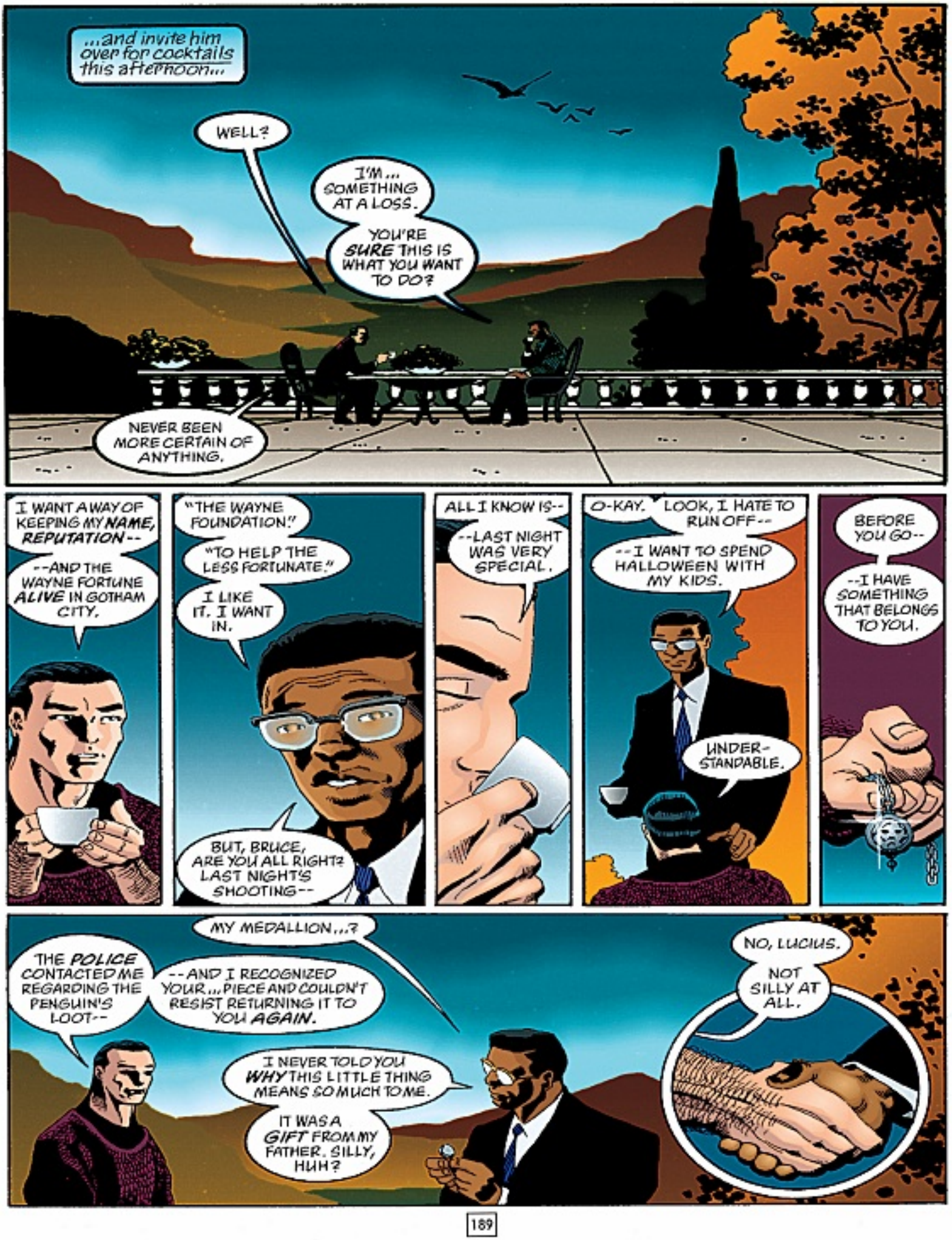

MARTHA WAYNE
BRUCE WAYNE
NOOOOOO!

HOW?
HOW DID THIS HAPPEN?
HOW WAS I SO EASILY FORGOTTEN?


IS THIS WHAT MY FATHER WAS TRYING TO TELL ME?
FOR ALL THE GOOD THAT BATMAN DOES...
...HAVE I LEFT NOTHING FOR MYSELF?
SPIRIT, ARE THESE VISIONS OF THINGS TO COME--
--OR IS IT TOO LATE TO CHANGE?
IS IT?


SPIRIT?
SPIRIT...
YES, I SLEPT QUITE WELL, THANK YOU.
IT WAS YOU WHO WENT TO BED COMPLAINING OF HAVING EATEN SOMETHING--
--"THAT DIDN'T AGREE WITH YOU."
ALFRED!
WHAT IS THAT YOU'RE SAYING, SIR?
YOU'RE ALL RIGHT THEN!
Gotham
PENGUI
CAPTURE
BY BATMA
I'VE BROUGHT YOU TEA.
PLAIN TOAST.
AND AN ACCOUNT OF YET ANOTHER OF BATMAN'S THRILLING EXPLOITS.
WHAT DAY IS IT?
TODAY? WHY, IT'S HALLOWEEN, MASTER BRUCE.
TONIGHT WILL BE FRAUGHT WITH ALL SORTS OF CRIMINAL ACTIVITY.
I ASSUME YOU'LL WANT YOUR COSTUME PRESSED.
ALFRED, DO NOT ASSUME ANYTHING!
All in one night.

Don't know what to make of it.
The spirits seem to have done their job--
--all in one night!
The library-- restored.
Everything is as it was...
...except...
SHOULD I BE THINKING ABOUT CALLING A DOCTOR, SIR?
NO, ALFRED, BUT IF YOU'LL FIND LUCIUS FOX FOR ME...


...and invite him over for cocktails this afternoon...
WELL?
I'M... SOMETHING AT A LOSS.
YOU'RE SURE THIS IS WHAT YOU WANT TO DO?
NEVER BEEN MORE CERTAIN OF ANYTHING.
I WANT A WAY OF KEEPING MY NAME, REPUTATION--
--AND THE WAYNE FORTUNE ALIVE IN GOTHAM CITY.
"THE WAYNE FOUNDATION."
"TO HELP THE LESS FORTUNATE."
I LIKE IT. I WANT IN.
BUT, BRUCE, ARE YOU ALL RIGHT? LAST NIGHT'S SHOOTING--
ALL I KNOW IS--
--LAST NIGHT WAS VERY SPECIAL.
O-KAY. LOOK, I HATE TO RUN OFF--
--I WANT TO SPEND HALLOWEEN WITH MY KIDS.
UNDER-STANDABLE.
BEFORE YOU GO--
--I HAVE SOMETHING THAT BELONGS TO YOU.
MY MEDALLION...?
THE POLICE CONTACTED ME REGARDING THE PENGUIN'S LOOT--
--AND I RECOGNIZED YOUR... PIECE AND COULDN'T RESIST RETURNING IT TO YOU AGAIN.
I NEVER TOLD YOU WHY THIS LITTLE THING MEANS SO MUCH TO ME.
IT WAS A GIFT FROM MY FATHER. SILLY, HUH?
NO, LUCIUS.
NOT SILLY AT ALL.

WOULDN'T YOU FEEL MORE COMFORTABLE GOING OUT THIS EVENING, SIR?
WHATEVER HAPPENS IN THE CITY TONIGHT, ALFRED, CAPTAIN GORDON AND HIS MEN CAN HANDLE IT.
I DARE SAY, I HOPE WE CAN AFFORD THE ELECTRIC BILL...
... I SCARCELY REMEMBER A TIME WHEN WE'VE HAD THIS MANY LIGHTS ON.
COOL...
TRICK OR TREAT!
HELLO.
I'll never truly understand what happened to me last night.
What's more, I'm not certain I want to.
Clearly, something had to be changed in my life.
And now... something has...
LOEB SALE 1995
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